

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF POLICE PENSION BOARD
HELD AT NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD, JAMES HOUSE, BELFAST
TUESDAY 5 DECEMBER 2023 at 2PM**

PRESENT:

Mr Michael Burton, Chair
Superintendent (Supt) Amanda Forde
Ms Alison McClune (PSNI)
Ms Aislinn McGuckin, (Director of Police Pensions and Injury Benefits, Northern Ireland Policing Board)
Ms Sinead Simpson (Chief Executive Northern Ireland Policing Board)
Mr Brian Quinn, (Independent)
Mr Liam Kelly (Police Federation NI)

PSNI REPRESENTATIVES IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Jim Montgomery (PSNI Pensions Branch)

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE

2 Board Officials

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received in advance of the meeting from Mark McEwan.

2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest were declared.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 5 SEPTEMBER 2023

The minutes of the Police Pension Board (**PPB**) meeting on 5 September 2023 were approved. The Chair asked that they also be published on the Northern Ireland Policing Board (**NIPB**) website. **(AP1)**

4. ACTION LOG

Members noted that all outstanding actions following the previous PPB meeting had been completed.

The Chair advised that the Public Sector Toolkit issued to all new PPB members should be completed within six months of receipt.

5. CHAIR'S BUSINESS

5.1 The Pensions Regulator Supervisory Report Update

The Chair felt it would be beneficial to meet individually with members to discuss. PPB Secretariat to coordinate dates for diaries. **(AP2)**.

6. SCHEME MANAGER REPORT

The Director of PPIB provided an overview of ongoing workstreams following the previous PPB meeting in September 2023.

Items discussed included:

- Board Officials are continuing to progress the McCloud Reassessment project. An overtime project designed to aid the work involved is now complete. The Board awaits direction from the Department of Justice (**DoJ**) and National Police Chiefs Council (**NPCC**) regarding a draft result letter for those who consented to reassessment and that reassessment has taken place. If advice is not forthcoming, the Board may need to request advice from the Crown Solicitors Office (**CSO**) in respect of same.
- Members were advised that roughly 17% of those cases who consented to McCloud reassessment had been assessed as upper tier. This number will be confirmed by the secretariat **AP3**.
- Members were informed that a transformation bid had been made for digitising the work of Police Pensions and Injury Benefits Directorate (**PPIB**). Both the PSNI and the DoJ are supportive of the bid. PPB members voted in favour of the bid. It was noted that by not having such a system in place is a major data risk and with that in mind, it should be added to the PPB Risk Register. **AP4**. The Chair also requested that members were kept informed of any further developments in this area.

7. PSNI GOVERNANCE REPORT AND SCHEME FINANCE

7.1 Quarterly Scheme Administrator Report

The Pensions Branch Official provided an overview of the Quarterly Scheme Administration Report. The paper provided Members with an analysis of scheme membership, financial reporting, branch performance and governance.

Items discussed included:

- Concerns amongst members regarding contributions receivable and the fact that members have not had a pay rise. It was noted that this may impact budgets in the coming years.
- There has been an increase in retirement notifications from members which is partly due to Pensions Branch bringing in a mandatory three month notice requirement.

- It was reported that there has been five overpayments in the period since the last meeting, all related to deaths.
- A link to the GAD calculator and the NPCC Circular of staging points has been shared with all officers.
- The Board is already scheduling ill health retirement assessments into March/ April 2024. PSNI representatives pointed out that referrals for ill health retirements will begin to slow down as PSNI Occupational Health and Wellbeing is operating with only one doctor.

7.2 Pensions Dashboard

The Pensions Branch Official provided an overview on the progress of the Pensions Dashboard Programme and Members noted the update.

Additionally members were informed that the NPCC had raised concerns regarding the unrealistic 2025 deadline for completion of the McCloud project. This has also been raised by the Regulators. With that in mind members were in agreement that it should be added to the Risk Register **AP5**. A further action point was agreed that the Chair (on behalf of the PPB) should write to the Board regarding the above concerns. The Pensions Branch Official will send key issues to the secretariat who in turn will draft a letter regarding same. **AP6**.

7.3 Procurement of Electronic Pension Administration System Update

The Pensions Branch Official confirmed that the Electronic Pension Administration System has been implemented by Civica and will go live in due course. The next stage of the process will commence in Spring 2024, which will involve having staff portals on all officers desktops.

The Pensions Branch Official advised that PSNI Pensions Branch is operating with two fewer staff members and financial support has not been forthcoming. The Head of Pensions Branch post has been advertised which when filled, should provide some continuity.

7.4 REPORT TO THOSE CHARGED WITH GOVERNANCE

The Pensions Branch Official expressed concern regarding the recommendation made in the above report on actuarial evaluations. It is unclear how the PSNI is expected to respond to same. It was agreed that the Police Pension Branch Official will raise this query at the next meeting with the Northern Ireland Audit Office (**NIAO**) specifically whether other schemes had accepted this recommendation and if so how they dealt with and responded to it. An update will then be provided to the next PPB meeting. **AP7**

8. POLICE PENSION BOARD RISK REGISTER

Members discussed each Risk on the Register including the inherent and residual risk scores and agreed on the Register being updated accordingly.

Members also agreed that a further risk should be added to the Register regarding staffing within both PPIB and PSNI Pensions Branch.

Officials agreed to action all Risk Register changes as requested by Members.
AP8

9. MCCLOUD REMEDY PROJECT

9.1 Legislative Update

An legislative update was provided by the Scheme Manager.

9.2 Scheme Administrator Update including Staffing/Resourcing and IT

In addition to item 7, the Pensions Branch Official provided an update on staffing/resourcing and IT infrastructure noting ongoing staff training and that progress was being made in relation to the Pensions Dashboard following the appointment of CIVICA.

10. MEMBER TRAINING

The Independent Member provided a training session on Actuarial Valuation.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair provided copies of a letter from him to the Chair of the Scheme Advisory Board Northern Ireland (**SABNI**) and the subsequent response, for members information. The Chair advised that he had asked the Chair of SABNI to attend a future PPB meeting.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would take place on Tuesday 4 June 2024.

MR MICHAEL BURTON
CHAIRMAN